

matters and criminal misdemeanors. In 1987, she was elevated to the Los Angeles County Superior Court, where she currently serves.

Judge Baker has handled thousands of cases from filing to disposition, and is widely recognized as one of California's finest jurists. In 1994, she received the Alfred J. McCourtney Trial Judge of the Year Award from the Consumer Lawyers of Los Angeles. The American Bar Association has rated Judge Baker unanimously "Well Qualified."

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote for these three distinguished nominees. I thank Senator LEAHY, the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, for moving these nominations. It is very important. We have numerous judicial emergencies. We have other nominees awaiting action by the committee and by the full Senate.

Senator LEAHY is moving with dispatch, which is appreciated, and it is also appreciated that the majority leader has listed these three nominees for action this morning.

In the absence of any other Senator seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUDGE GREGORY KENT FRIZZELL

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to follow up on the comments made by my senior Senator, Mr. INHOFE, from Oklahoma, on the qualifications of Judge Gregory Frizzell. He has enumerated many of those. This is a fine young man with impeccable character and integrity. He is a living example of a life of service, not just in what he does as a judge in Oklahoma, but what he does in his community in Oklahoma. It has been a real pleasure to get to know him, to also watch him as he went through the process of getting a unanimous vote out of the Judiciary Committee and having no significant questions raised about his judicial philosophy, integrity, character, background, or his qualifications. So it is with a great deal of pleasure that I look forward to his vote today.

I might comment for a moment that he was capable of being confirmed in the last Congress, and there was no reason, no good reason why he wasn't, other than the answer: We are not going to approve any more judges in this Congress. That is the reason I was told by the now majority leader that he would not be approved. There is no question as to his qualifications, but it should remind us again of the dangers of partisanship for party instead of partisanship for our country and for future generations.

I am very thankful to the Judiciary Committee chairman, PATRICK LEAHY from Vermont, for the speed and quickness with which he has brought this to the floor. I thank him for that, and I

look forward to working with him with the same speed on any other judges the President might bring up and that the committee would put out.

It is my hope we can get beyond partisanship on judiciary nominees and get to the business of filling the significant number of voids or vacancies that are out there today and that are limiting justice for people in this country. Justice delayed is justice denied. And a lack of available judges is denying justice to hundreds and thousands of Americans every day. So the chairman of the Judiciary Committee has my commitment as a member of the Judiciary Committee to help him in any way I can to move those.

It is a great honor that Greg Frizzell will sit as a Federal judge in the northern district of Oklahoma, and it is my hope we will see many like him fill the spots across this country.

With that, I yield the floor, Mr. President, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold?

Mr. COBURN. I will withhold.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF LAWRENCE JOSEPH O'NEILL TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOMINATION OF VALERIE L. BAKER TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOMINATION OF GREGORY KENT FRIZZELL TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consider en bloc the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Lawrence Joseph O'Neill, of California, to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California;

Valerie L. Baker, of California, to be a United States District Judge for the Central District of California; and

Gregory Kent Frizzell, of Oklahoma, to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 10 minutes for debate on the nominations, equally divided between the Senator

from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY, and the Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. SPECTER, or their designees.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I spoke briefly a few moments ago about these nominees. They all have excellent academic records and professional records, and they have been examined by the investigative authorities and have been reviewed by the Judiciary Committee. They have been passed out unanimously by the Judiciary Committee for confirmation. All have been evaluated "well qualified" by the American Bar Association, and I urge my colleagues to support all of these nominees.

That pretty well summarizes, Mr. President. So in the absence of any Senator seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll. The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF LAWRENCE JOSEPH O'NEILL

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to support Judge Lawrence O'Neill's nomination to the Eastern District of California.

His confirmation would help to alleviate a judicial emergency in the Eastern District of California.

The Fresno Division, to which Judge O'Neill is nominated, is suffering from a particularly acute overload of cases.

Judge Anthony Ishii and Senior Judge Oliver Wanger are currently the only judges on the Fresno Division of the Eastern District. Their average caseload is the highest in the Nation.

The people of Fresno and the Eastern District truly need the help that Judge O'Neill will provide.

Fortunately, Judge O'Neill is uniquely qualified to step in and offer immediate relief to the Eastern District because he has been a magistrate judge in the District since 1999.

In addition, for the last 17 years, Judge O'Neill has been a judge in California, spending 10 years as a superior court judge in Fresno before becoming a magistrate.

He is a homegrown Californian. He was born in Oakland, CA, and attended school in California. He received a bachelor's degree in criminology from the University of California, Berkeley, a master's degree in public education from Golden Gate University, and a law degree from Hastings College of Law.

Before attending law school, he was a police officer for the city of San Leandro. I believe this additional perspective will prove an asset on the bench.

I was pleased to learn that the American Bar Association unanimously declared Judge O'Neill to be "well qualified," the ABA's highest rating.

In California, we have developed a bipartisan process for selecting Federal district court nominees. Under this system, a committee of lawyers, including Democrats and Republicans, recommends qualified applicants to the President.

The fact that Judge O'Neill's nomination was a product of this commission gives me confidence that he comes to the bench without an ideological agenda and is prepared to serve all the people of California.

NOMINATION OF VALERIE L. BAKER

Mr. President, it is my pleasure to support Judge Valerie Baker, a distinguished nominee to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

The Central District of California, based in Los Angeles, is the largest and busiest Federal judicial district in the Nation. Judge Baker would be a welcome addition to this important court.

Judge Baker has been a trial court judge on the Los Angeles County Superior Court for nearly 20 years and previously served on Los Angeles Municipal Court.

In 1994, she was awarded the Alfred J. McCourtney Trial Judge of the Year Award from the Consumer Lawyers of Los Angeles.

Judge Baker is also a seasoned litigator, with Federal experience in criminal and civil cases. With the law firm of Lillick, McHose & Charles she specialized in Federal business litigation and antitrust law. As an assistant U.S. attorney, Judge Baker prosecuted bank robberies, major drug violations, and fraudulent enterprises.

At the University of California at Santa Barbara, she earned a bachelor of arts degree and a master's degree in English, and she received a law degree from UCLA.

Off the bench, Judge Baker has devoted herself to charities helping the Los Angeles community.

As a board member of the UCLA Law School Alumni Association, she chaired a committee to recruit qualified minority students. She also served on the board of a non-profit shelter for homeless teenagers and sat on the board of directors of the Braille Institute of Los Angeles.

The American Bar Association has given Judge Baker a unanimous "well qualified" rating, the Association's highest mark.

I am proud of the bipartisan process for selecting Federal district court nominees that we have developed in California. Under this system, a committee of lawyers, including Democrats and Republicans, recommends qualified applicants to the President.

Judge Baker came through this committee, which gives me confidence that she comes to the bench without an ideological agenda and is prepared to serve all the people of California.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Senate continues to make significant progress in its consideration of judicial nominations. The Senate will consider

and, I believe, confirm the nominations of Lawrence Joseph O'Neill for the Eastern District of California, Valerie L. Baker for Central District of California, and Gregory Kent Frizzell for the Northern District of Oklahoma.

When they are confirmed, the Senate will have granted its consent to 263 of President Bush's nominations for lifetime appointments to our Federal courts. Moreover, with these three confirmations today, we will have confirmed more of President Bush's nominations in the 18 months I have served as Judiciary Committee chairman with a Democratic majority in the Senate than in the more than 2 years when Senator HATCH chaired the committee with a Republican Senate majority or during the last Congress with a Republican Senate majority. This is the 105th confirmation during my time as Judiciary chairman.

I know some on the other side of the aisle have tried to raise a scare since I, again, became chairman of the Judiciary Committee. They rant as if the sky is falling and we would not proceed on any judicial nominations. We have proceeded promptly and efficiently. Last Thursday, the Judiciary Committee held its first business meeting of the year. We might have met earlier but for the delay in organizing the Senate from January 4, when this session first began, until the Republican caucus finally agreed to the resolutions assigning Members to Senate committees on January 12.

The three nominations we consider today were among the five nominations for lifetime appointments Federal judges that I included on the agenda at our first meeting. Like the two judges confirmed on Tuesday, Judge O'Neill's nomination is for a vacancy that has been designated a judicial emergency by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. All five were among those returned to the President without Senate action at the end of last year when Republican Senators objected to proceeding with certain nominees in September and December last year.

Before proceeding, I inquired of each member of the committee whether a hearing was requested on these nominations this year. I, again, thank all, members of the Judiciary Committee for working with me to expedite consideration of these nominations this year. In particular, I extend thanks to our new members, the Senators from Maryland and Rhode Island.

These nominations were not even sent to the Senate until January 9. They were considered by the committee in a little over 2 weeks and are being approved by the Senate in a little over 3 weeks from their nomination.

I have worked cooperatively with Members from both sides of the aisle on our committee and in the Senate to move quickly to consider and report judicial nominations so that we can fill vacancies and improve the administration of justice in our Nation's Federal courts. I appreciate the interests of

Senator CHAMBLISS and Senator ISAAKSON in the confirmation of Judge Wood, the first judge confirmed this year. Likewise, I was pleased to be able to respond to the needs of Senator INHOFE and Senator COBURN by expediting consideration of Judge Frizzell. I thank Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BOXER of California for their efforts on some of these nominations and for working to fill the vacancies in California.

I have long urged the President to fill vacancies with consensus nominees. The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts list 57 judicial vacancies, 28 of them have been deemed to be judicial emergencies. So far this Congress, the President has yet to send us nominees for 17 of those judicial emergency vacancies.

I have also scheduled a confirmation hearing for next week for additional judicial nominees and another business meeting at which the committee may consider still more judicial nominations. When a Republican chaired the committee in 1999 and there was a Democratic President, the first hearing on a judicial nominee was not held until June 16. We intend to hold a hearing on February 6.

I had initially thought that we would include the nomination of Norman Randy Smith of Idaho to the Ninth Circuit at that hearing next week. However, with the cooperation of the Senators from California and the members of the Judiciary Committee, I now hope to be able to avoid another hearing on the Smith nomination.

I was pleased when the White House changed course and nominated Randy Smith for the Idaho seat on the Ninth Circuit. I had urged President Bush to take this action last year when he insisted on resubmitting the Smith nomination for a California seat on the Ninth Circuit. I thank the President for finally doing the right thing. I will urge the Senate to confirm his nomination of Randy Smith to the vacant seat on the Ninth Circuit from Idaho. At long last Senator CRAIG and Senator CRAPO will then have a judge on that important court from their home State.

Each of the nominees we consider today has the support of home State Senators.

Lawrence Joseph O'Neill is nominated to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California, another seat deemed to be a judicial emergency by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. He is a well-qualified nominee who has over 15 years of experience on the bench, seven of them as a magistrate judge on the district court to which he is now nominated. Before becoming a magistrate judge, Judge O'Neill spent 9 years as a Fresno County superior court judge and, before that, a decade in private practice. Judge O'Neill will bring a valuable perspective to the Federal bench, having served as a police officer for 5 years in

the city of San Leandro, CA. He graduated from law school at the University of California, Hastings and then clerked for Judge Robert F. Kane on the California Court of Appeals.

Valerie L. Baker, who is nominated to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, already has over 20 years of experience on the bench. As a Los Angeles County municipal and then superior court judge, she has handled thousands of cases and has been the recipient of the Alfred J. McCourtney Trial Judge of the Year Award by Consumer Lawyers of Los Angeles. After graduating from UCLA Law School, Judge Baker served as an assistant U.S. attorney and as a commercial litigator in private practice. Judge Baker was rated unanimously well qualified by the American Bar Association and has the support of both her home State Democratic Senators.

As a courtesy to Senator INHOFE, I included the nomination of Gregory Kent Frizzell on the agenda for Judiciary Committee's first executive business meeting last week. I was glad to see Senator INHOFE say that he was "pleased with the committee action" and that Judge Frizzell was "fast-tracked through." Judge Frizzell is nominated to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma. He has a decade of experience on the bench as an Oklahoma district judge in Tulsa County. In his 23 years as a lawyer, Judge Frizzell has served as general counsel to the Oklahoma Tax Commission and tried more than 25 cases in private practice as a sole practitioner and an attorney at Jones, Givens, Gotcher & Bogan, P.C., representing community colleges, insurance companies, and other businesses. After graduating from the University of Tulsa and the University of Michigan Law School, Judge Frizzell served as a law clerk to Judge Thomas R. Brett on the court to which he has now been nominated.

I congratulate the nominees and their families on their confirmations today. We continue to make progress towards filling longstanding judicial vacancies. I intend to do what I can to ensure that the Federal judiciary remains independent and able to provide justice to all Americans.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back and the vote begin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

VOTE ON THE NOMINATION OF LAWRENCE JOSEPH O'NEILL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Lawrence Joseph O'Neill, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 40 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Akaka	Domenici	Menendez
Alexander	Dorgan	Mikulski
Allard	Durbin	Murkowski
Baucus	Ensign	Murray
Bayh	Enzi	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Biden	Feinstein	Obama
Bingaman	Graham	Pryor
Bond	Grassley	Reed
Boxer	Gregg	Reid
Brown	Hagel	Roberts
Brownback	Harkin	Rockefeller
Bunning	Hatch	Salazar
Burr	Hutchison	Sanders
Byrd	Inhofe	Schumer
Cantwell	Isakson	Sessions
Cardin	Kennedy	Shelby
Carper	Kerry	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Snowe
Chambliss	Kohl	Specter
Clinton	Kyl	Stabenow
Coburn	Landrieu	Stevens
Cochran	Lautenberg	Sununu
Coleman	Leahy	Tester
Collins	Levin	Thomas
Conrad	Lieberman	Thune
Corker	Lincoln	Vitter
Cornyn	Lott	Voinovich
Craig	Lugar	Webb
Crapo	Martinez	Whitehouse
DeMint	McCain	Wyden
Dodd	McCaskill	
Dole	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—3

Inouye Johnson Warner

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON NOMINATION OF VALERIE L. BAKER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, regarding the Baker of California nomination, we are perfectly willing to have a voice vote. I understand the Senators from Oklahoma want to have a recorded vote on Frizzell. Valerie Baker is next on the list.

I yield back the remaining time.

Mr. SPECTER. We yield back the remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Valerie L. Baker, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON NOMINATION OF GREGORY KENT FRIZZELL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the Gregory Frizzell nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I yield back whatever time we have remaining on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is all time yielded back?

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I was honored a few minutes ago to talk about this very outstanding young man, Greg Frizzell. Unfortunately, as the senior Senator from Vermont knows, we tried our best to get him in last year. We were unable to do it. But thanks to him and helping us to expedite the confirmation of this fine young man, we will be voting now.

This gentleman comes from a background that is unusual and unique. I know of no one who has said anything negative about him in our State of Oklahoma. So I think justice will be served with the confirmation of Greg Frizzell for the Northern District of Oklahoma.

I am proud to stand here today in support of Judge Greg Frizzell's nomination to be the U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma. After his Judiciary Committee hearing in September, I was certain that he would be confirmed before the end of the year. However, due to some regrettable political wrangling, his nomination was stalled.

Fortunately, over the past few weeks, I have spoken to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to help expedite Judge Frizzell through the committee process and bring his nomination to the Senate floor. I am convinced that he is the most capable and well-qualified person for this position.

His family is no stranger to the legal field—I can remember his father, Kent Frizzell. He served as attorney general for the State of Kansas—that is when I first got to know his family. Later on, when they moved to Oklahoma, we became very close friends.

He has had all kinds of experience in the past—serving the Under Secretary of Interior, and he has taught at the University of Tulsa Law School for almost 20 years. So given his father's distinguished work, it is no surprise that Judge Frizzell felt compelled to pursue a career in public service, and his friends and colleagues have praised his professional qualifications and personal integrity, as well as his ability to rule fairly from the bench.

Someone who has been around as long as this young judge has been around, you would think you would hear negative things—I have never heard anything negative about him. Robert Sartin, member of the board of governors of the Oklahoma Bar Association said, "Judge Frizzell is a man of extremely good character and high integrity, with a deep sense of personal responsibility toward his fellow man." Judge Claire Egan, praised him and talked about the urgency to fill vacant spots on the bench—she emphasized the fact that the court right now has three judges doing the work of six.

One of the prominent and well-respected attorneys in Oklahoma, Joe Wohlgemuth of a distinguished law firm in Tulsa, called Judge Frizzell "a man of integrity and a straight arrow".

Before serving in the current position of District Judge of the 14th Judicial District of Oklahoma, Greg Frizzell had a long and distinguished legal career and ample Federal experience. After graduating with a law degree from the University of Michigan, he clerked for Judge Tom Brett—Tom Brett is now in retirement and there is no one who has a better reputation than he, and he has praised Greg Frizzell time and time again. Ralph Thompson, a prominent senior judge serving on the Federal bench in Oklahoma, has also praised him.

After clerking for Judge Brett, Frizzell became an associate at an Oklahoma law firm and then ran his own private legal practice until he was selected to be general counsel to the Oklahoma Tax Commission. After serving for a period of time at the Tax Commission, he was then appointed to his current position as Judge of the 14th District of Oklahoma.

Not only has Judge Frizzell proven an effective and fair legal professional, he is a devoted husband and loving father of six children.

Getting back again to Mr. Wohlgemuth, he recalls an incident where Judge Frizzell, had to work late one night doing work and he brought all six kids to spend time with them into the late hours—anyone who can handle six kids while doing his judicial work, I think can handle this job.

So, Judge Frizzell is a man of great moral integrity who has proven his character in both his private and public life. I cannot say enough about him and his qualifications to be the next U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma and I urge my colleagues to confirm his nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, a brief comment on Gregory Frizzell. He was born in Wichita, KS, which is a great note of distinction, being it is my birthplace. I debated against his father in high school. So I have a little more enthusiasm in asking my colleagues to support his confirmation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Gregory Kent Frizzell, of Oklahoma, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma?

The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 41 Ex.]

YEAS—99

Akaka	Domenici	McConnell
Alexander	Dorgan	Menendez
Allard	Durbin	Mikulski
Baucus	Ensign	Murkowski
Bayh	Enzi	Murray
Bennett	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Graham	Obama
Bond	Grassley	Pryor
Boxer	Gregg	Reed
Brown	Hagel	Reid
Brownback	Harkin	Roberts
Bunning	Hatch	Rockefeller
Burr	Hutchison	Salazar
Byrd	Inhofe	Sanders
Cantwell	Inouye	Schumer
Cardin	Isakson	Sessions
Carper	Kennedy	Shelby
Casey	Kerry	Smith
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Snowe
Clinton	Kohl	Specter
Coburn	Kyl	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Stevens
Coleman	Lautenberg	Sununu
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Conrad	Levin	Thomas
Corker	Lieberman	Thune
Cornyn	Lincoln	Vitter
Craig	Lott	Voinovich
Crapo	Lugar	Warner
DeMint	Martinez	Webb
Dodd	McCain	Whitehouse
Dole	McCaskill	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Johnson

The nomination was confirmed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider the votes on the nominations are considered made and laid on the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal Minimum Wage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I wish to speak on another matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the verdict is in on the President's plan to send more American troops into Iraq: 68 percent of the American people are opposed to it; 62 percent of Active-Duty military officers are opposed to it. Top military leaders have voiced skepticism about whether an increase in troops will succeed in suppressing the sectarian violence that has consumed Iraq. The evidence is in. The voice of the people, the American people—voix populaire—is clear. It is time to turn around. Unfortunately, this administration seems to have no intention of heeding that call from the people.

Last week, the Vice President talked about the "enormous successes" that have been accomplished in Iraq. Enormous successes? I ask, enormous successes? The Vice President's definition of "enormous success" is, apparently, different from mine.

The Vice President said that talk of failures and blunders in Iraq was just hogwash—his word, "hogwash"—and the Vice President asserted that whatever Congress votes on in relation to Iraq, "it won't stop us." Hear me now. Hear me. This is the Vice President talking. He asserted that whatever Congress votes on in relation to Iraq, "it won't stop us."

Now, listen to me, you people out there in the hills, in the valleys, across the mountain ranges, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, that is a slap in the face to you. Our constituents voted for change in the last election. They asked their elected representatives—us—to chart a new course in Iraq. This administration continues to disregard the will of the American people, it continues to disregard the people of the Nation, the authority of the Constitution. The administration believes it can continue to ignore the message that is coming—yes—from the American people, loudly and clearly: Bring our sons and daughters home.

That is why the bipartisan resolutions we will be debating are so important. That is why they are so important. We have a duty as the elected representatives of the people of the United States to be their voices and to speak the truth. And the truth is that sending more American troops into Iraq would be a continuation of the mistakes that brought us there in the first place. The truth is that many of us in both parties deeply, deeply disagree with the President's decision to increase our commitment in Iraq rather than to decrease it. The truth is that the American people are fed up with having our—our—soldiers caught in the crossfire of a civil war.

It is important to send that message from the people to the President of the United States. But it is not enough. The American people are asking us to send a message, but they are also asking us for answers. What is our strategy? What is our strategy in Iraq? I am not a Johnny-come-lately on this question. I was against sending American troops into Iraq in the first place. I said so, and I voted so.

So what is our strategy in Iraq? Why are we there? When can our sons and daughters and grandchildren come home? When can our sons and daughters come home? This President has had almost 4 years to articulate answers to those questions. Unfortunately, he has failed at every opportunity. And so it falls to us—us, you Senators and me, and Members of the other body—to find a way forward out of the mess he has created. That is why I will be introducing, within the coming days, a resolution that is a new approach to the war, a resolution that is